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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB AND EUR/UMB

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SUBJECT: LITHUANIA CONDEMNS FRAUDULENT UKRAINIAN ELECTIONS;
CALLS FOR CALM

Classified By: POL/ECON OFFICER TREVOR BOYD
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) Summary. Lithuanian government and parliamentary officials strongly condemned reports of fraud in Ukraine's second round of presidential elections. Fully supporting the EU statement on the elections, they noted that Ukraine has apparently been deprived of an opportunity to demonstrate its willingness to integrate more closely with Euro-Atlantic institutions. More than half of parliament signed a statement of solidarity in support of a "European Ukraine." Lithuania will likely continue to push for strong measures within the EU to condemn the results and sanction those responsible for electoral fraud. End Summary.

12. (U) Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis said in a November 24 press interview that Ukraine should seek a "proper assessment of the results" of the second round of presidential voting, revising them if necessary, and he urged that it handle the current "complicated situation" in a "peaceful and civilized way." Valionis observed that Lithuania agrees wholeheartedly with the EU view that the Ukrainian elections did not meet international standards.

13. (C) Mindaugas Kacerauskis, head of MFA's Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus Division, told us that Lithuania is "very saddened" by the "tragic events" that unfolded during Sunday's election and fully supports the strong EU statement on the elections. Kacerauskis added that Ukraine had lost an opportunity to demonstrate its willingness to more fully integrate in European and Euro-Atlantic organizations. Ricardis Degutis, Director of MFA's Eastern European and Central Asia Department, had earlier told the Ambassador that Lithuania is very concerned about reports of massive fraud perpetrated in the election. Echoing Degutis's comments, Kacerauskis observed that some oblasts reported returns of participation by more than 100 percent of registered voters. While Lina Sucilaite, one of Lithuania's election monitors in the Zhitomir oblast, could not personally corroborate any instances of serious electoral fraud, she shared with us rumors of citizens receiving 50 hryvna (about USD 10) to use ballots pre-marked with Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich's name. (Note: Lithuanian sent seven election observers to both rounds of Ukraine's presidential elections).

14. (U) 85 of Lithuania's 141 parliamentarians signed a letter authored by Conservative MP Rasa Juknevičienė on November 23 to opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko expressing solidarity with the "aspirations of the Ukrainian nation to create a fair, European Ukraine." Juknevičienė, clad in pro-Yushchenko orange during Tuesday's parliamentary session, said that it is important that Lithuania illustrate its support for a European Ukraine.

15. (U) Liberal Centrist MEP Eugenijus Gentvilas released a statement November 24 expressing support for Ukraine's democratic forces and hope that calm will prevail in Kiev. Commenting that electoral violations "were obviously directed by Yanukovich's camp," Gentvilas' statement said that Ukraine's "pro-Moscow authorities led by Viktor Yanukovich" had tried to steal victory from Ukraine's people "to ensure that Ukraine cannot take its rightful place in the family of European states." The statement praised efforts to "peacefully request" that Ukrainian authorities examine the election results.

16. (C) Comment. Lithuania's response is still a work in progress. We expect the GOL to continue to press the issue of electoral fraud with the GOU both bilaterally and multilaterally. Lithuania will likely join the chorus pushing the EU to formulate a coherent policy to provide incentives to Ukraine to conform to Western standards in its policies and practices as well as to punish those who perpetuated electoral fraud. Lithuania's voice will be one more in the region that may give Ukraine's authorities, and Moscow, pause before continuing with their electoral fraud.
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